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<div style="text-align: center;">UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL</div> <p>New nonprovisional application under 37 CFR</p>	Attorney Docket No.	98-26	Total Pages 20
	First Named Inventor or Application Identifier		
	Bell et al.		
	Express Mail Label No.	EE096002249US	

Application Elements
See MPEP chapter 600 concerning utility patent application contents.

1. ☒ **Fee Transmittal Form** [Total Pages 1]
(Submit an original, and a duplicate for fee processing)

2. ☒ **Specification** [Total Pages 13- including cover sheet]
(preferred arrangement set forth below)
-Descriptive title of the invention
-Cross References to Related Applications
-Statement Regarding Fed sponsored R&D
-Reference to Microfiche Appendix
-Background of the Invention
-Brief Summary of the Invention
-Brief Description of the Drawings (if filed)
-Detailed Description
-Claim(s)
-Abstract of the Disclosure

3. ☒ **Drawings(s)** (35 USC 113) [Total Sheets 3]

4. ☒ **Oath or Declaration** [Total Pages 2]
a. ☒ Newly executed (original or copy)
b. ☐ Copy from a prior application (37 CFR 1.63(d))
(for continuation/divisional with Box 17 completed)
(Note Box 5 below)
i. ☐ **DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)**
Signed statement attached deleting
Inventor(s) named in the prior application
See 37 CFR 1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b).

5. ☐ **Incorporation By Reference** useable if Box 4b is
Checked) The entire disclosure of the prior
Application, from which a copy of the oath
or declaration is supplied under Box 4b, is
considered as being part of the disclosure
of the accompanying application and is
hereby incorporated by references
therein.

6. ☐ **Microfiche Computer Program** (Appendix)

7. **Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission**
(If applicable, all necessary)
a. ☐ Computer Readable Copy
b. ☐ Paper Copy (identical to computer copy)
c. ☐ Statement verifying identity of above copies

ACCOMPANY APPLICATION PARTS
8. <input type="checkbox"/> Assignment Papers (cover sheet & document(s)) [Total Pages]
9. <input type="checkbox"/> 37 CFR 3.73(b) Statement (when there is an assignee <input type="checkbox"/> Power of Attorney
10. <input type="checkbox"/> English Translation Document (if applicable)
11. <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement (IDS)/PTO-1449 [Total Pages 2] <input type="checkbox"/> Copies of IDS Citations
12. <input type="checkbox"/> Preliminary Amendment
13. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Return Receipt Postcard (MPEP 503) (Should be specifically itemized)
14. <input type="checkbox"/> Small Entity <input type="checkbox"/> Statement filed in prior application, Statement(s) Status still proper and desired
15. <input type="checkbox"/> Certified Copy of Priority Document(s)
16. <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

17. If a CONTINUING APPLICATION, Check appropriate box and supply the requisite information:
☐ Continuation ☐ Divisional ☐ Continuation-in-part (CIP) of prior application No.: _____ / _____

18. CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

☐ Customer Number or Bar Code Label or ☒ Correspondence address below
(Insert Customer No. or Attach bar code label here)

NAME	Marc Lorelli				
ADDRESS	DaimlerChrysler Intellectual Capital Corporation				
	CIMS 483-02-19				
	800 Chrysler Drive East				
CITY	Auburn Hills		STATE	Michigan	ZIP CODE
					48326-2757
COUNTRY	United States		TELEPHONE	FAX	
			(248) 576-5294	(248) 576-7905	

**A SLED SYSTEM FOR MOUNTING
PARKING BRAKE AND SHIFT ASSEMBLIES**

TECHNICAL FIELD

This invention relates generally to the mounting of a parking brake and shift
5 assemblies, and more particularly to a sled system for accomplishing same.

DISCUSSION

Motor vehicle technology has evolved to provide the option of mounting various
assemblies in different locations within the vehicle. In a sport utility vehicle for example
10 it is preferred to mount the transfer case shift lever assembly, the parking brake hand
lever assembly and the gear shift lever assembly in a center console position for ease
of operation by the driver. In order to accomplish this the assemblies are generally
mounted to the vehicle floor pan.

Under conventional methods, the vehicle floor pan is generally comprised of a
15 stamping that is reinforced by various methods in order to accommodate mounting of
various assemblies and fixtures directly to the floor pan. Under the state of the art, a
single floor pan is supplied for both manual and automatic transmissions. In order to
accommodate a manual or an automatic transmission shift lever assembly, the floor pan
is constructed with the appropriate configuration, including the appropriate apertures and
20 fasteners to accomplish this. In doing so, in the instance when one or the other
transmission assembly is installed, there are necessarily fasteners and/or apertures that
are not utilized. This results in several negative limitations including increased cost
involved in fabricating a floor pan with fasteners and/or apertures that are not utilized
and fabricating the floor pan in a configuration that can accept either assembly.

Additionally, the floor pan must be constructed with added reinforcement in order to accommodate the stresses and strains involved in operating the assemblies. In providing a floor pan that can accommodate both manual and automatic transmissions, limitations in installation exist in that line workers come in contact with the redundant fasteners resulting in reduced ergonomics. In addition, when apertures are not utilized this results in the potential intrusion of water as well as the possibility of noise, vibration and harshness (NVH) problems in the vehicle. These limitations, unless compensated for, may result in complaints from the end user.

It is therefore desirable to provide a system which can alleviate the above-referenced negative limitations.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide a sled system to accommodate an automatic or a manual transmission without the redundancies of fasteners and/or apertures that are not utilized.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a sled system for assembly off site as a module for installation into a motor vehicle.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a sled system that is sufficiently rigid thereby removing the necessity for reinforcement in the floor pan.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a sled system that can accommodate a NVH and water barrier.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a sled system that provides a harmonious environment for dimensional control.

These and other objects are obtained by providing a sled system having a sled with a predetermined configuration, the sled being adapted to fit onto a vehicle floor pan, the sled having a plurality of openings for accepting at least one assembly, the assembly being disposed within an opening in the sled and mounted to the sled by a plurality of fasteners.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In order to appreciate the manner in which the advantages and objects of the invention are obtained, a more particular description of the invention will be rendered by reference to specific embodiments thereof which are illustrated in the appended drawings. Understanding that these drawings only depict an illustrated embodiment of the present invention and are not therefore to be considered limiting in scope, the invention will be described and explained with additional specificity and detail through use of the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of the sled system according to the principles of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a top view of the sled according to the principles of the present invention;

Figure 3 is a bottom view of the sled according to the principles of the present invention; and

Figure 4 is a schematic diagram of the sled system for mounting a parking brake and shift assemblies according to the principles of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The present invention is directed toward a sled system 10 for mounting a parking brake shift lever and other shift assemblies within a passenger compartment of a vehicle as illustrated in Figure 1. The sled system 10 has multiple applications depending on the intended use. For purposes of description of the illustrated embodiments, the sled system 10 will be detailed for use in a sport utility vehicle. The present invention as hereinafter detailed should not be interpreted as limiting the breadth of potential uses in other vehicles or in other commercial fields of endeavor for other intended purposes.

The sled system 10 in accordance with the illustrated embodiment of Figure 1 has a gear shift assembly 14, a parking brake hand lever assembly 18 and a transfer case shifter assembly 16 mounted to a sled 12. The gear shift assembly 14, the parking brake hand lever assembly 18 and the transfer case shifter assembly 16 are known in the art. The sled 12 has further mounted to it in a forward position to the gear shifter assembly 14, an instrument panel (I/P) mounting bracket 20, and in a rearward position to the parking brake assembly 18 a console mounting bracket 22.

In the environment of a sport utility vehicle, the sled 12 is mounted onto a floor pan 23 (a portion of which is shown) of the sport utility vehicle during assembly of the vehicle. The advantage over conventional methods is that the floor pan can be of a singular design, without the necessity to accommodate both an automatic and a manual transmission assembly. By incorporating the necessary complexity into the sled 12 to accommodate various assemblies, the sled system 10 as assembled in a vehicle has the advantage over the prior art of reduced cost and increased efficiency. Additionally, the sled 12 has the advantage of allowing for the reduction of NVH and the intrusion of water

without added extra measures being required at additional expense. Also, the sled 12 has the advantage of allowing for greater rigidity during operation of the gear shift assembly 14, the parking brake hand lever assembly 18 and the transfer case shifter assembly 16. As such, by incorporating the necessary rigidity into the sled 12 the removal of reinforcements from the floor pan is accomplished which translates into a cost savings.

By use of the sled 12 a line worker is not confronted with the necessity of coming into contact with fasteners that are not utilized during installation of various assemblies. The sled 12 also has the further advantage of having the gear shift assembly 14, the parking brake assembly 18 and the transfer case shifter assembly 16 being installed onto the sled 12 before the sled 12 is mounted into a vehicle. Therein the sled system 10 has the further advantage of being assembled off site and being introduced into the vehicle as a module.

Turning to Figures 2 and 3, an illustrated embodiment of the sled 12 is shown. The sled 12 is shaped to mate with the floor pan 23 (a portion of which is shown) of a vehicle. The sled 12 has a gear shift aperture 30 that is designed and positioned in the sled 12 to accept the gear shift assembly 14 such that placement of the gear shift assembly 14 into the gear shift aperture 30 results in the gear shift assembly 14 being in operable communication with the shift assembly operating cable (not shown) of the vehicle. In placement of the gear shift assembly 14 into the gear shift aperture 30, the gear shift assembly 14 comes in contact with gear shift fasteners 32 that are disposed on sled 12 in a predetermined configuration in order to mate with accepting orifices of a mounting flange portion of the gear shift assembly 14 (not shown) such that the gear

shift assembly 14 can be fixedly mounted into position on the sled 12.

Returning to Figures 2 and 3, the sled 12 has a transfer case shifter aperture 34 located in a position adjacent to the gear shift aperture 30 on the sled 12. The transfer case aperture 34 is positioned and adapted to accept a transfer case shifter assembly 16 such that a transfer case shifter assembly 16 when disposed within the transfer case aperture 34 is in operable communication with the transfer case operating cable (not shown) of the vehicle. The sled 12 further contains transfer case fasteners 36 which are positioned about the transfer case aperture 34 in a manner such that when the transfer case shifter assembly 16 is disposed within the transfer case aperture 34, accepting orifices in a mounting flange portion of the transfer case shifter assembly 16 accept the transfer case fasteners 36 such that the transfer case shifter assembly 16 can be fixed by way of the transfer case fasteners 36 to the sled 12.

Returning to Figures 2 and 3, the sled 12 has in a position rearward to the gear shift aperture 30 and the transfer case aperture 34 a parking brake hand lever aperture 24, and in a more rearward position a parking brake cable access aperture 28. The parking brake aperture 24 is designed and positioned to accept a parking brake hand lever assembly 18 such that when the parking brake hand lever assembly 18 is disposed within the parking brake aperture 24, the parking brake hand lever assembly 18 is in operable communication with a parking brake cable of the parking brake system of the vehicle. The parking brake aperture 24 has disposed around it parking brake fasteners 26 which are positioned such that when the parking brake assembly 18 is disposed within the parking brake aperture 24, accepting orifices in a mounting flange portion of the parking brake assembly 18 mate with the parking brake fasteners 26 such that the

parking brake assembly 18 is fixed to the sled 12. In mounting the parking brake assembly 18 to the sled 12, a brake cable extends from the parking brake assembly 18 to the vehicle, through the parking brake cable axis port 28 and a parking brake cable port 43.

5 Returning to Figures 2 and 3, the sled 12 has in a forward position to the gear shift aperture 30 and the transfer case shifter aperture 34 an instrument panel (I/P) mounting bracket 20. The sled 12 has in a rearward position to the parking brake cable access aperture 28 a console mounting bracket 44. It should be understood that the I/P mounting bracket 20 and the console mounting bracket 44 are optional and may be
10 attached to the sled 12 by a variety of methods. The sled 12 is fixedly mounted in position onto the floor pan 23 of a vehicle via fasteners that are accepted by front orifices 38, middle orifices 42 and rear orifices 40 of the sled 12. Additionally, when the sled system 10 is mounted in position, I/P mounting bracket 20 is used to mount to the instrument panel, and the console mounting bracket 44 is used to mount the console to
15 the sled 12.

 It should be understood that the sled 12 can have various shapes in order to mate with a particular vehicle floor pan. Additionally, the sled 12 can vary in the placement, the position and design of apertures. Also, the sled 12 can vary in the existence of apertures, and in the existence and placement of fasteners. It should also be
20 understood that the sled 12 may also be configured with or without the assemblies as shown in the illustrated embodiments including the removal of the transfer case shifter assembly 16, the parking brake assembly 18 or the gear shift assembly 14, or any combination thereof. Additionally, the sled 12 can be configured to accept other

components or assemblies such as for example a heater duct or a parking brake bracket. Finally, it should be understood that the I/P mounting bracket 20 and the console bracket 44 may have a variety of configurations, and may or may not be included individually or together on the sled 12.

5 Turning to Figure 4, the block diagram illustrates alternate embodiments of the sled system 10 wherein the sled 12 has a gear shift portion 50, a transfer case portion 52 and a parking brake portion 54, wherein a gear shift assembly 14, of either a manual or automatic type, is disposed and mounted in the gear shift portion 50, a transfer case shifter assembly 16 is disposed and mounted in the transfer case portion 52 and a
10 parking brake hand lever assembly 18 is disposed and mounted in the parking brake portion 54. A console 58 is mounted to the sled 12 via the console mounting bracket 44. It will be understood that any combination of the gear shift portion 50, the transfer case portion 52 and the parking brake portion 54 may be used. It will also be understood that the gear shift portion 50, the transfer case portion 52 and the parking brake portion 50
15 will have an appropriate configuration, including the position and shape of apertures and the inclusion and position of fasteners in order to accommodate the disposition and placement of an assembly in an appropriate position in relation to a vehicle. In operation, following mounting of sled system 10 either as a module or assembled within the vehicle movement of an appropriate lever operates an appropriate system in the
20 vehicle resulting in an appropriate response.

Those skilled in the art can now appreciate from the foregoing description that the broad teachings of the present invention can be implemented in a variety of forms. Therefore, while this invention has been described in connection with particular examples

thereof, the true scope of the invention should not be so limited since other modifications will become apparent to the skilled practitioner upon a study of the drawings, specification and the following claims.

CLAIMS

What is claimed:

1. A sled system for mounting a shift assembly to a vehicle comprising:
a sled having a predetermined configuration, said sled being adapted to fit onto a vehicle floor pan, said sled including a first opening for accepting a shift lever assembly;
5 a shift lever assembly disposed within said first opening, said sled including a second opening for accepting a brake lever assembly;
a brake lever assembly disposed within said second opening; and
a plurality of fasteners for mounting said shift lever assembly and said brake lever assembly to said sled.
2. The sled system according to claim 1 wherein said shift lever assembly is an automatic transmission shift lever assembly.
3. The sled system according to claim 1 wherein said shift lever assembly is a manual transmission shift lever assembly.
4. The sled system according to claim 1 wherein said sled includes a third opening including a transfer case shift lever assembly disposed in said third opening.
5. The sled system according to claim 1 further comprising a console mounting bracket fixedly attached to said sled.

6. The sled system according to claim 5 further comprising a console member mounted to said console mounting bracket.

7. The sled system according to claim 1 further comprising an instrument panel mounting bracket mounted to said sled.

8. The sled system according to claim 1 wherein said sled system is assembled as a module.

9. A sled system comprising:

a sled having a predetermined configuration, said configuration being designed to mate with a floor pan of a vehicle;

a first opening defined by said sled, said first opening being configured to accept a gear shift assembly;

a second opening defined by said sled, said second opening being configured to accept a parking brake lever assembly; and

a plurality fasteners adapted to affix a parking brake assembly and a gear shift assembly to said sled.

10. The sled system according to claim 6 further comprising a console mounting bracket mounted to said sled.

11. The sled system according to claim 6 further comprising an instrument panel mounting bracket mounted to said sled.

12. A sled system comprising:

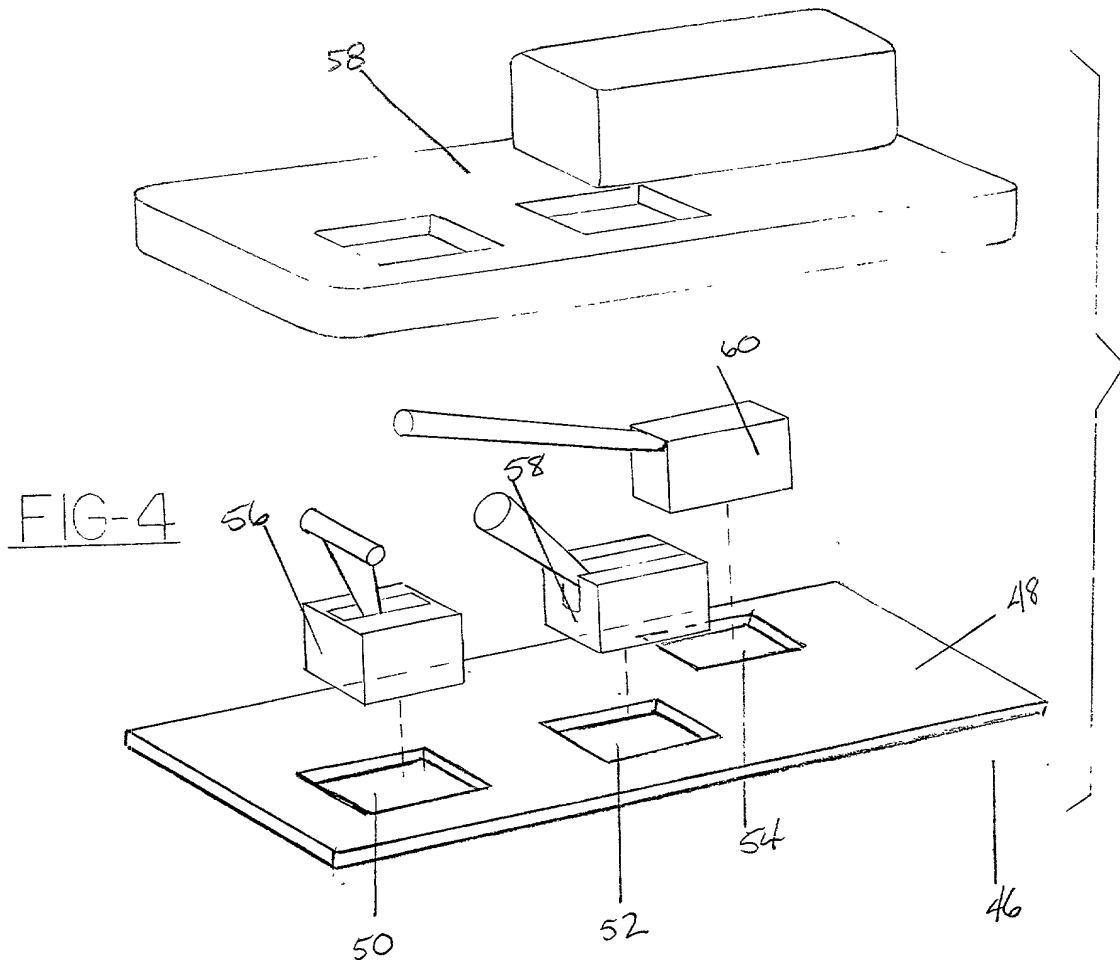
a shaped sled adapted for mounting onto a floor pan of a motor vehicle, said shaped sled having first, second and third openings, said first opening being adapted to receive a gear shift assembly, said second opening being adapted to receive a parking brake hand lever assembly and said third opening being adapted to receive a transfer case shifter assembly, said shaped sled including mounting holes utilized to mount said shaped sled to said motor vehicle floor pan.

13. The sled system according to claim 12 further comprising an instrument panel mounting bracket and a console mounting bracket fixedly attached to said sled.

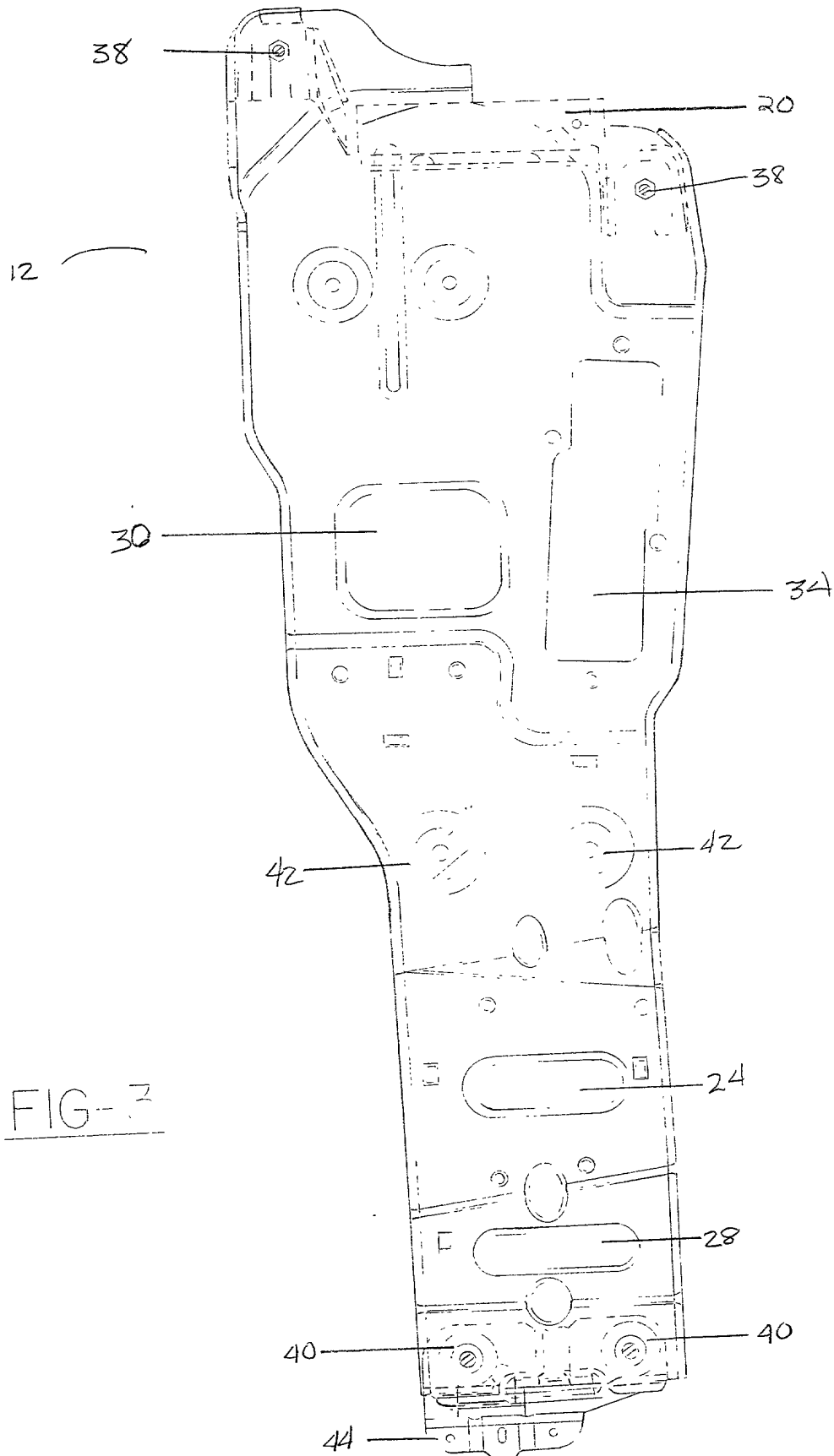
A SLED SYSTEM FOR MOUNTING PARKING BRAKE AND SHIFT ASSEMBLIES

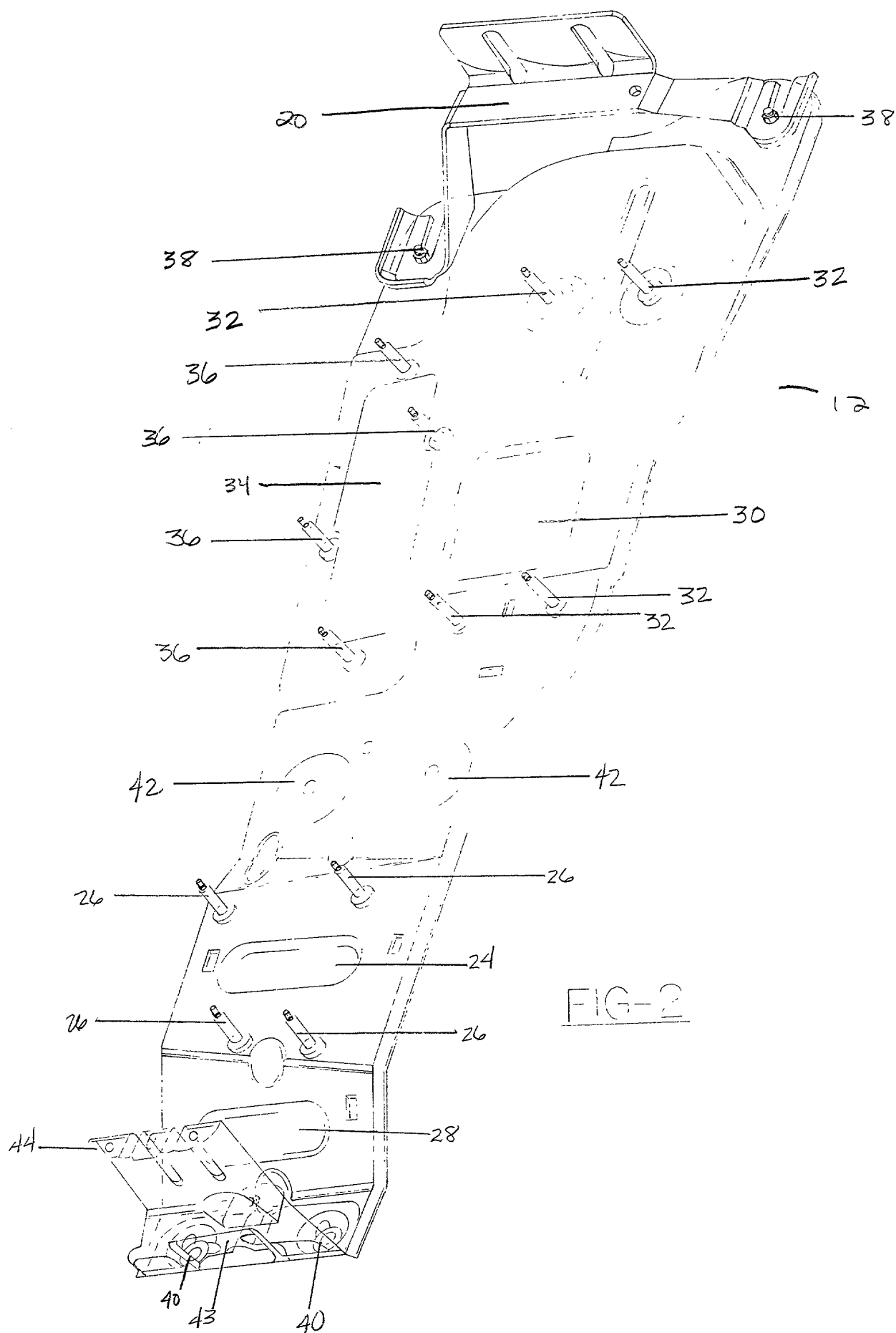
ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A sled system for mounting a parking brake hand lever assembly and a gear shift assembly to a vehicle floor pan, the sled system having a predetermined configuration to mount on a vehicle floor pan.



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[illegible]

DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR PATENT APPLICATION

As below named inventors, We hereby declare that:

Our residences, post office addresses and citizenships are as stated below next to our names.

We believe we are the original, first and joint inventors of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

A SLED SYSTEM FOR MOUNTING PARKING BRAKE AND SHIFT ASSEMBLIES

the specification of which is attached hereto.

We hereby state that we have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

We acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the examination of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56(a).

We hereby declare that all statements made herein of our own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Power of Attorney: As a named inventor, we hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith:

Donna L. Berry,	Registration No. 36,451
Mark P. Calcaterra,	Registration No. 30,363
William J. Coughlin,	Registration No. 29,143
Marc Lorelli,	Registration No. 43,759
Kenneth H. MacLean,	Registration No. 25,236
Roland A. Fuller III,	Registration No. 31,160
Lawrence J. Shurupoff,	Registration No. 30,219
Jennifer M. Stec,	Registration No. 35,379
James R. Yee,	Registration No. 34,460

Send Correspondence to: Marc Lorelli, CIMS 483-02-19
DaimlerChrysler Intellectual Capital Corporation
Chrysler Technology Center
800 Chrysler Drive East
Auburn Hills, Michigan 48326-2757

Direct telephone calls to: Marc Lorelli, (248) 576-5294

Full name of Inventor: Larry W. Bell

Inventor's Signature: Larry W. Bell
Residence: 46512 Overhill Lane, Canton, MI 48188
Post Office Address: Same as above
Citizenship: United States

Date: 8-5-99

Full name of Inventor: John G. Thomas

Inventor's Signature: John G. Thomas
Residence: 37919 Five Mile Road, Livonia, MI 48154
Post Office Address: Same as above
Citizenship: United Kingdom

Date: 8.5.99

Full name of Inventor: Robert N. Maley

Inventor's Signature: Robert N. Maley
Residence: 17163 Park Lane, Fraser, MI 48026
Post Office Address: Same as above
Citizenship: United States

Date: 8-5-99

Full name of Inventor: Derrick Dysart

Inventor's Signature: Derrick Dysart
Residence: 23500 Coventry Woods Lane, Southfield, MI 48034
Post Office Address: Same as above
Citizenship: United States

Date: 8-6-99

Full name of Inventor: Richard L. Kelley

Inventor's Signature: Richard L. Kelley
Residence: 1439 Chesapeake, Royal Oak, MI 48067
Post Office Address: Same as above
Citizenship: United States

Date: 8-5-99

Full name of Inventor: E. Mackey King

Inventor's Signature: E. Mackey King
Residence: 10674 Eagle Ravine Drive, Brighton, MI 48114-9096
Post Office Address: Same as above
Citizenship: United States

Date: 08-06-99